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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

"They all can swallow, if they do no more."

ON THE CULTIVATION OF TASTE.

DEFINITIONS previous to discussions are very useful. Let us first understand what we mean by the word taste. I suppose your interesting correspondent C.E., intends to designate that cultivation of the intellect, which adorned Homer, Horace, and the other luminaries he mentions. In this point, the advantages of taste, as a branch of knowledge, are inestimable. Pope correctly lays the foundation of taste in good sense, as "something previous ev'n to taste—'tis sense." He also exhibits an example of the absurdity of taste, or of the more fashionable term *virtu*, when not supported by utility, or when the end to be obtained does not sanction the time and expense employed in the acquisition.

"What brought Sir Visto's ill-got wealth to waste?
Some Demon whisper'd, 'Visto! have a taste!'"

Although the family of the Vistos are numerous at present, and their absurdities and sickly fantasies tend to bring taste into disrepute, yet it is unfair to argue from the abuse, against the use of an employment of the human mind, capable of affording many pleasures, and of preserving from many pains. A sickly fancy, and a self-tormenting fastidiousness, may have their pains, yet "the pains and penalties" of the ignorant man are not much more supportable, and they expose still more to the grosser temptations attendant on idleness. They who are most engrossed in business, must necessarily have some pauses. These are often filled up by men, who, for want of cultivation, suffer their minds to run to waste, by the indulgence of the excesses of the table;

With the female sex, cards, "the amusement of a royal idiot," according to Dr. Johnson, "and which bid fair to make idiots" of their votaries, level all distinctions, and put ignorance and misapplied genius on a level, causing the latter to lose all natural superiority; for at a card-table the brightest genius is lowered to the degrading level of ignorance.

The cultivation of mind, or of a refined intellect, is the best preservation against these vicious or ignoble modes of spending time, and is therefore highly to be recommended to youth, who, in setting out in life, should be incited to store their minds with every incitement to virtue. Persons of both sexes who have formed a taste for *useful reading*, and by disciplining their minds, have risen superior to the too common practice of reading merely to pass the present hour, have always a resource against the dangers of idleness. Enlarge the sphere of innocent pleasures, and make it as wide as possible. Reading is one of the most extensively useful, and the most easily attainable. Dr. Aikin, in his valuable "Letters from a Father to his Son, on various topics relative to literature, and the conduct of life," in 2 vols. 8vo., has an excellent chapter on cheap pleasures. This chapter, and indeed the whole of these letters, may be read with advantage by youth setting out in life, as in them they may find many observations which may assist them in their perilous voyage.

Taste, especially literary taste may be eminently contradistinguished from the squeamish and affected delicacy of fastidiousness, and in any controversy on the subject, the one should be carefully separated from the other. Then the advocates of lazy ignorance would be driven from

their shelter, arising from the ambiguity of terms, and the advocates of knowledge and improvement would be freed from the difficulty of supporting the imperfections, which though not inherent in their system, have, through ignorance, or worse design, been imputed to it.

The larger the stock of useful knowledge which we possess, or the more refined our taste or perception, if we are careful to confine ourselves to those studies in which the useful decidedly preponderate, the more truly respectable we shall be in life, and we shall most essentially contribute to our own happiness and comfort. The lazy notion of being easily pleased with ourselves and our attainments, how much soever it may add to our self-complacency, and may gratify an ignoble love of ease, or may be countenanced by the example or language of others, is destructive of all the higher exertions of virtue. We should early learn to disregard all palliatives for idleness, and firmly persevere in spite of indolence, a habit difficult to be surmounted, in strenuous exertions to add to our present stock of attainments. Without labour and perseverance, nothing great or valuable can be obtained.

K.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

Your insertion of Catharine Cappe's Observations on Charity-schools, induces me to request the insertion of the following remarks on the incalculable evils which arise from apprenticing young girls for their labour. The question, ought female children who have been educated in poor-houses and charity-schools, when of a suitable age, be bound apprentices for a number of

years, is of great importance; * and although some of your readers may not find the subject very interesting, yet I trust there are many others who will think the time spent in reading the following remarks will not have been misapplied.

CORNELIA.

REMARKS ON APPRENTICING FEMALE CHILDREN ON THEIR LEAVING A CHARITY-SCHOOL; BY CATHARINE CAPPE.

SO deeply is my mind impressed by the great importance of the inquiry respecting apprenticing female children, so fully aware, that, in the course of it, the painful duty will devolve upon me of differing in opinion from some of the most benevolent and worthy, that I feel an uncommon anxiety, lest I may not be able to do it justice; lest, through the inability of stating as they ought to be stated, the many unanswerable objections to the continuance of this practice, an opportunity may escape, of exciting attention to the subject, which, if once lost, may never occur any more.

* Upon what principle are the lives of the unfortunate children preserved, who are sent to a poor-house or charity-school, if their welfare in their future progress through life, is not a highly important consideration? "It had been better for thousands of individuals to have perished in their infancy," says Mr. Beruard, in his introductory letter to the 3d volume for bettering the condition of the poor, "than to have protracted an injurious and hateful existence of vice, infamy, and wretchedness. It is not the number, but the welfare, and the moral and religious improvement of our fellow-subjects, that should be the object of our researches; it is the formation and institution of virtues and active members of society, adapted by early habits and education to their different stations of life."